IMT Nuremberg Archives

H – 96

International Court of Justice

H0096 - 0002

Official transcript of the International Military Tribunal in the matter of: The United States of America, the French Republic, The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northen Ireland, and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics against Hermann Wilhelm Goering et al, defendants, sitting at Nurnberg, Germany, on 29 March 1946, 1000-1300, Lord Justice Lawrence presiding.

THE PRESIDENT: Before the examination of defendant von Riobentrop goes on the Tribunal desires me to draw the attention of Dr. Horn and of the defendant von Ribbentrop to what the Tribunal has said during the last few days.

In the first place the Tribunal said this: The Tribunal has allowed the defendant Goering, who has given the evidence first of the defendants and who has proclaimed himself to be responsible as the second leader of Nazi Germany, to give his evidence without any interruption whatever, and he has covered the whole history of the Nazi regime from its inception to the defeat of Germany. The Tribunal does not propose to allow any of the other defendants to go over the same ground in their evidence except in so far as is necessary for their own defense.

Secondly, the Tribunal ruled that evidence as to the injustice of the Versailles Treaty or whether it was made under duress is inadmissible.

Thirdly, though this isn't in order of the Tribunal, I must point out that the Tribunal has been informed on many occasions of the view of the defendants and some of their witness that the Treaty of Versailles was unjust and therefore any evidence upon that point apart from this being inadmissible is cumulative, and the Tribunal will not hear it trerefore for that reason.

Ans lastly, the Tribunal wishes me to point out to Dr. Horn that it is the duty of counsel to examine their witness and not to leave them simply to make speeches, and if they are giving evidence which counsel knows is inadmissible according to the ruling of the Tribunal it is the duty of counsel to stop the witness. That is all.

. . . . . .

THE PRESIDENT: Dr. Seidl, if you are going to refer to Gauss'affidavit the Tribunal will not deal with that matter now, it will be dealt with after the defendant von Ribbentrop has given evidence.

DR. SEIDL: (counsel for the defendant Hess) Mr. President, I spoke with Dr. Horn, counsel for the defendant Ribbentrop --

H0096 - 0003

THE PRESIDENT: Dr. Seidl, I don't care whether you spoke to Dr Horn or not or what arrangement you may have made with Dr. Horn; it is not convenient to the Tribunal to hear Dr. Gauss'evidence at the present moment, they want to go on with TRibbentrop's evidence.

JOACHIM von RIBBENTROP -- resumed.

DIRECT EXAMINATION -- continued.

BY DR. HORN (counsel for defendant Ribbentrop):

Q Yesterday at the end you were speaking about your political impressions in England and France. In connection with that I would like to put the following questions. Did you make efforts to tell Hitler your impressions and your views as you saw British and French politics at that time?

A Since the 30th of January 1933 I saw Hitler repeatedly, and of course told him about my impressionswhich I gathered on my frequent travels to England and France, and reported to Hitler.

H0096 - 0004

Q What was Hitler's attitude toward France and England at that time?

A Hitler's attitude and position was as follows: He saw an enemy to Germany in France, arising from the policies and politics which France carried on with regard to Germany, beginning with the end of the First World War, and especially the position which she took in questions of equality for Germany. This position of Hitler's is brought forth in his book Mein Kampf.

I knew France very well, since for a number of years I had connections there. At that time I told the Fuehrer much about France. He was interested in hearing my opinion, and I noticed that he had a growing interest for things French in the year 1933. Then I brought him together with a number of Frenchmen, and I believe some of these visits, and perhaps my pictures as to the position taken by many Frenchmen, as well as all of French culture--

Q What kind of Frenchmen were they?

A They were French economic leaders, French journalists, and statesmen or politicans. The pictures I presented to Hitler were very interesting to theFuehrer, and gradually he received the impression that in France there were men who would not reject an understanding with Germany.

Then, first of all, I presented an argument to the Fuehrer, an argument ofmy deepest conviction and of my experience of the prior years. It was the great wish of the Fuehrer, as is well known, to come to a definite friendship with England and to come to an agreement with England as well.

In the beginning the Fuehrer, as far as German-French policies are concerned, treated this separately or by itself. I believe at that time I succeeded in convincing the Fuehrer that an understanding with England would be possible only by having an agreement with France as well--an understanding with France as well. I remember very exactly some conversations I had with the Fuehrer. This made a strong impression on him. He told me then that since I had followed a rather personal course of understanding between Germany and France, I should continue on this task and report to him on the progress of my efforts.

Q Then, you were Hitler's Foreign Political Counselor, not the counsel of the Party. Can you tell me a little more about that?

A I have already said that I told Adolf Hitler about experiences on my journeys. The impressions I gathered, which I told him on my return from

H0096 - 0005

England and France, were of interest to him, and without referring to special conferences or discussions, I was received repeatedly by Hitler. I spoke with him repeatedly and in that way it came about, more or less in a natural way, that outside and beyond the official channels or politics he was interested in having my opinion; and asked my advice on things which I had seen in the foreign countries.

He was ready to listen to my advice. Above all, he had a vital interest, of course, for questions English. I told him about public opinion and about personalities, and brought Frenchmen and Englishmen to him, and now he could do something which he loved to do, to exchange thoughts unofficially.

Q What was your personal co-operation in your efforts for an agreement with France in the years 1933 to 1935? What were your efforts in that direction?

A Even at that time I considered the solution of the Saar question and brought this question up for discussion. I tried through my own private channels to tell the Frenchmen in Paris that a reasonable and quiet solution of the Saar question in the spirit of the plebiscite as laid down in the Versailles Treaty would be and should be a good omen for relations between the two countries. I spoke with many numbers of people during these years in Paris and made connections with members of the French cabinet. I would like to add that I had discussions and conversations with the then French president Poumergue, with the then assassinated Foreign Minister Barthou, with Mr. Laval, and above all with Mr. Daladier.

I remember that with special reference to the Saar question, I met with complete agreement with Daladier on that. Then a little later I noticed that at those visits of Frenchmen with Hitler it was again and again mentioned, "Yes, now we have Mein Kampf to deal with, and your attitute and your policies toward France are established in that book." I tried to tell the Fuehrer to give forth an official revision of this chapter of Mein Kampf. The Fuehrer said, and I remember it verbatim, that he had decided, through his practical policies, to prove to the world that he had changed his view in this respect, that things which had been written down could not be changed, that they were historical fact, and his then view, or

H0096 - 0006

his former view toward France, had been determined by France's attitude toward Germany at that time. But now one could turn over a new leaf in the history of the two countries and their relations to each other.

Then I asked Adolf Hitler to receive a French journalist, so that perhaps through a public announcement a revision of his view as expressed in his book Mein Kampf -- to change the view and to affirm his new view to the world.

He agreed with this, received a French journalist, and gave him an interview. I don't exactly recall just when; it was sometime in 1933, though. I believe this article appeared in "Le Matin" and created quite a bit of excitement. I was very glad, for with this article all doubts were removed and a tremendous step toward an understanding with France had been reached. Then I contemplated what could be done subsequently and how, from the simple matters now, a connection between French and German statesmen could be arranged.

Q At that time wasn't there an intermediary meeting between Hitler and Daladier? Didn't you contemplate a meeting of that sort and did you make efforts in that behalf?

H0096 - 0007

As I was just going to turn to that point,

At that time Daladier was the Premier. I had suggested to him that he meet Adolf Hitler so that quite frankly, man to man, a discussion could be carried on, to see whether Franco-German relations could nor be put on an entirely new and different basis. Mr. Daladier was quite taken with this start. I reported this to Hitler and Hitler was ready to meet Daladier.

The meeting place was to be in the German Odenwald and was agreed upon. I went to Paris so that the last arrangements could be made with that.-

MR. DODD: If your Honor pleases, I am reluctant to interfere in any respect with this examination of the Defendant, but my colleagues and I feel that this particular part of the examination is quite immaterial and in any event much too detailed, and that we will never get along here. If Counsel would abide by the instruction of the Court given this morning, we could move along much more directly and much more quickly.

THE PRESIDENT: Dr. Horn, the Tribunal thinks that the objection is really well founded. The Defendant is dealing with a period between 1933 and 1935, and the efforts which he made for good relations with France. Well, now, that is very remote from any question which we have to decide in this case, and therefore to deal with it in this detail seems to the Tribunal a waste of time.

DR. HORN: Then I will put other questions, which concern his direct cooperation.

Q What caused Hitler to appoint you Plenipotentiary for Disarmament?

A I believe I was appointed the Plenipotentiary for Disarmament in April. The reasons are as follows:

Hitler was of the opinion that there should be equality of armament, and he believed that equality of armament would be possible only if and when negotiations could be carried on with France and England; and this, of course was my position also, at that time, in my efforts to establish good relations between Germany and England, since this was the pet wish of the Fuehrer. On this mission I went to London and while there made contacts with British political figures.

H0096 - 0008

First of all I made connection with Lord Baldwin, with whom I spoke, I also spoke with the then Prime Minister Mc Donald. I mentioned the German desire for equality and sounded the opinion of these Ministers on the basis of a long discussion which I had with Lord Baldwin, I believe on the 1st of December 1933. I believe Lord Baldwin made a speech in Commons, in which he pointed out thay somehow one would have to meet Germany half-way. Equality of armament had been promised to Germany and therefore it would have to be reached in some way. In this connection there were three posibilities: One, that Germany would arm up to the level of the other powers -- and that was not desirable; the second possibility, that the others would disarm to the level of the Germany -- and that could hardly be carried through; and, three one would have to make compromise and meet in the center and permit Germany a limited rearmament, and the other countries for their part would have to disarm to meet Germany on an equal basis. In that way Adolf Hitler at that was very glad for this British position and he appreciated it, for he considered it a practicable way to carry through equality of armament for Germany.

Unfortunately, then, in the course of events, it was not possible to put the suggestions of Lord Baldwin into practice. Adolf Hitler therefore subsequently took the view that a system --

(A slight pause.)

(Resuming) He saw that unfortunately in the system which was currently prevalent in international ideas, in negotiations the pleasant and agreeable thoughts of Lord Baldwin could not be carried through.

Q What practicable discussion of limitation of armament did you carry through -- or were you instrumental in carrying through?

A It is well known that Hitker left the League of Nations and the Disarmament Conference, for he deemed it impossible through channels of negociation to carry through the German demands and desires. Hitler saw no other possibility, except through the power of the German people to achieve its aims from within -- through the power of the German people. He knew, of course, that this was a tremendous risk; but on the basis of his prior experience of the preceding few years he saw no other way out, so that then Germany decided to rearm.

H0096 - 0009

Q (Interposing)-- --

A I would like to finish the answer to your question.

As a practical result, these things took place. In the course of the year 1934 there was a closer contact between the German Government and the British Government. There were numerous visits of British statement in Berlin. Sir John Simon and Mr. Eden were among the visitors, and during these visits the suggestion was heard whether, as far as naval agreement was concerned, at least a pact, an agreement could be reached. Hitler was very much interested in this start, and in the course of the conversation between the British and the German Government it was agreed that I should go to London to discuss with the British Government, efforts to bring a naval agreement into existence.

It is rather needless for me to go into the details of this pact which later materialized. Hitler from the beginning -- and of himself -- was of the opinion that if a final agreement or understanding with England could be reached one would have to acknowledge the absolute naval supremacy of Great Britain for all time. Then the Naval Pact of 1935 was made and the agreements which were made in 1935 were different in every respect from those which existed before the first World War.

After relatively short negociations, then, this naval agreement was concluded in London. This Pact was very important to future British-German relations, and at that time it was the first practical result of an actual armament limitation.

Q At that time did France agree to the rearmament and how did you personally function in that regard?

A I would like to say first of all that Hitler and myself were extraordinarily happy at the conclusion of this pact. I know and I can stay it from personal experience -- that I had never seen Hitler as happy as I saw him at the time, at the moment when I told him personally in Hamburg of the conclusion of this naval agreement.

H0096 - 0010

Q And what was France's attitude toward this pact?

A With France the situation was a little difficult. I had already noticed that while the negotiations were taking place, for the limitation of armaments had been deviated from. Then I told the gnetlemen of the Foreign Office -- if I may mention their names, Sir Robert Craigie and the then British Admiral Little among them -- that I would go to France so that I could strengthen my ties to French statesmen and to tell them about the importance of an agreement between Germany, France and England and to show them all the ramifications for the future.

I would like to point out a few details. In this Tribunal sometime ago a film was shown in which there was a speech I made at the conclusion of this naval agreement and this film showed or allegedly showed that it was really a two-timing of Germany diplomacy. At that time I made that speech in London in order to document and to show in front of the whole world that we were not concerned with unilateral British-German matters but that it was a wish of Hitler -- and the naval agreement was in the spirit of this thought -- to bring about a general limitation of armament and that the naval pact would serve to further good relations between France and Germany. This wish was sincere and very real.

I went to France, spoke with French statesmen and, I believe, helped in a small way so that the first step in the limitation of armaments was considered reasonable by many Frenchmen, especially if you considered matters in the long run and with the thought that in the long run equality of rights would have to be granted to the German people.

Q Then you were made Ambassador at London. Can you tell me a little about the reasons for that?

A Things developed as follows: In the time subsequent to naval agreement an agreement which was hailed in English circles, I made many efforts to bring Lord Baldwin and the Fuehrer together, and I would like to add in that connection that the meeting had been arranged through a friend of Mr. Baldwin, a Mr. Jones. The Fuehrer had agreed to fly to Chequers to meet Lord Baldwin, but unfortunately Lord Baldwin had to decline at the last minute. Just why Lord Baldwin had to decline at the last minute I do not know, but there was no

H0096 - 0011

doubt that certain forces in England at the time did not wish a German-British understanding.

Then in the year 1936 when the German Ambassador, von Hesch, died, it was said on the part of Germany that one should make another last effort to come to a good agreement and good relations with England.

I would like to mention in this connection that at that time I had already been appointed State Secretary for the Foreign Office and has asked personally that that appointment be recalled and that I be sent to London as German Ambassador.

The following thought might have been decisive in the decision of Hitler Hitler had a certain, definite opinion or picture of the theory of equality of rights as far as England was concerned, but my view deviated somewhat from Hitler's. My conviction was that England would continue to support her own balance-of-power theory before and after -- that England would maintain that theory, whereas Hitler was of the opinion that this theory of the balance of power was rather obsolete and that from now on England would wish to see a much stronger Germany with reference to the changed picture in Europe and also taking into consideration the strength shown by Russia that Germany would in a way counterbalance the power of Russia. In order to give a definite and clear picture on the spot and to tell him how matters actually stood in England -- that must have been one of the reasons why the Fuehrer sent me to England.

Another reason was that at that time we hoped through relations with the circles in England who were very friendly to Germany, that connections between the two countries could be made friendly and that perhaps we could reach an agreement.

The aim of Hitler in the final analysis was a pact between Germany and England.

Q In what way was your ambassadorial activity hampered in England?

A I would like to say first that in the 1930's -- roughly 1935 and 1936- I made many trips to England, and while I was there, on instructions from the Fuehrer, had discussions for a German-British pact. The basis of this pact is known, and it was to make the naval ratio 100 to 35, to make it permanent

H0096 - 0012

and that the integrity of the Low Countries and France was to be guaranteed forever. That was the thought of the Fuehrer and that Germany would be ready to keep and maintain the British Empire and to use its power if necessary and that in regard to Germany and England, they should recognize each other's power.

It has already been said, and I would like to repeat, that the efforts in the 1930's did not come to any concrete result. It was one of the Fuehrer's deepest disappointments, and I would like to say that at this point -- for it is very important for further developments -- that this pact upon which the Fuehrer had placed such a very great hope and which he had considered as the complete cornerstone of his foreign policy, that this pact never materialized. Just how and what forces operated so that it did not materialize I cannot tell for I do not know, but in any case we never got very far.

Then I remained in London as Ambassador. I referred to this question again and again while I was Ambassador, discussed it with circles who were friendly to Germany, and I must say that there were many Englishmen who had a very positive attitude toward Germany.

Q Did you receive any attitude that was negative?

A There were in England, of course, some elements who were against the thought of a close connection with Germany, who were against a close understanding on basic principles and perhaps traditional elements who were not inclined toward a pact of this kind, and I would like to say briefly, even though I have to dip back into the year 1936, that during the Olympic games in the year 1936 I tried to win Lord Vansittart to the thought we had in mind on the pact. I had a discussion of several hours' duration with him at Berlin. Hitler also received him and discussed the same matter with him. Lord Vansittart, even though our personal relations were excellent, met our proposals with a certain reserve.

In the year 1937 when I was in London I saw that gradually two trends were forming in England, one trend being very much inclined and very much in favor of dealing with Germany and promoting good relations and the second trend not wishing such an agreement or collaboration.

I believe that I do not need to mention names, for they are well known, but there were those gentlemen who did not wish close contact and connections with Germany. It was the later Prime Minister, Winston Churchill, and others.

H0096 - 0013

Then in London I made strenuous efforts in order to promote our thoughts but events occurred which made my activity there most difficult; first of all Spanish politics and policies. It is well known that civil war raged in Spain at that time and in London the Non-Intervention Congress was meeting.

As Ambassador to the Court of St. James I had a very difficult task. On the one hand, with all means at my disposal, I wished to further a German-English pact, and cement German-English relations but on the other hand I had the instructions of my government as far as Spain was concerned to maintain my attitude in that connection. These instructions were often contradictory. Certain efforts of the politics of the British were at cross purposes and this sort of League of Nations which the Non-Intervention Congress represented, and of which I was the authorized German member, represented a mortgage on the chief aim with which Hitler had sent me to London.

In order to give you a clear and definite picture of the times, I believe it is important for me to show that it was not only the Spanish policy or politics but that doubtlessly in these years, 1937, beginning of 1938, in England the trend of thought became increasingly obvious. That, of course, today is known as a historical fact, that is that trend which did not wish a pact with Germany. Why? The answer is very simple, very clear. These circles saw that through a National Socialist Germany a factor which might disturb the traditional British balance of power on the Continent.

I am of the opinion and of the conviction that Adolf Hitler in no way intended ever at that time to proceed against England or to undertake anything against England of its own accord; that he had sent me to London with the ardent wish to reach an agreement and an understanding with England. From London I reported to the Fuehrer the situation as I found it and before this Tribunal now I wish to set forth a point and explain that point, a point which is relevant to my own defense.

It has been claimed and asserted very frequently that I told the Fuehrer from England that England was degenerate and England would perhaps not fight. I may and must establish and assert here, from the beginning I reported exactly the opposite to the Fuehrer. I told the Fuehrer that in my opinion

H0096 - 0014

the English leadership and the English people had a heroic attitude and position and that these people would be ready to fight for the existence of their empire to the last man. Later, in the course of the war in a speech in the year 1941, after I had talked with the Fuehrer, I made this view publicly known in my speech.

Conclusively and in summary, I would like to say as to the situation existing in London in the year 1937 and 1938, when I was acting ambassador, that I was fully cognizant of the fact thatit would be very difficult to conclude a pact with England. But even so I reported that all efforts would be made so that peaceful negotiations and an agreement with England could be reached. That was to be a decisive factor in Germany's politics, that is, to reach an understanding with England. By that I mean the development of German power in accord with British tendencies and views so that these two views would not conflict.

Q During the time of your ambassadorship you made the so-called Anti-Commintern Pact with Japan. How was it that you, especially as ambassador, concluded that agreement?

A I would like to make a few preliminary remarks and say that in the year 1938 I was appointed Foreign Minister on the 4th of February.

On the 4th of February I was in Berlin. The Fuehrer had me summoned and said that he wanted to make me Foreign Minister. Were you talking of the Three Power Agreement?

Q No, you misunderstood. I meant to say that during your activity as Ambassador you concluded the Anti-Commintern Pact in the year 1936. Italy joined in 1937, then Spain as well as other countries. How was it that you, as ambassador, concluded this pact?

A Adolf Hitler at that time considered the idealogical difference between Germany, that is National Socialism, and Communism one of the most decisive factors of his politics and policies. Therefore, there was the question as to how a way could be found to win additional countries to combat Communist efforts. We are concerned with idealogical questions in this case.

Hitler first of all, I believe in the year 1933, spoke to me about this and as to whether in some way we could create closer contact with Japan.

H0096 - 0015

I replied that I personally had certain connections in Japan and would be glad to use my efforts in that behalf. As Japan had anti-commintern thoughts as well as Germany, in the years 1933, 1934, 1935, I believe, the thought was raised and crystallized whether these neutral efforts might not be made the basis of a pact. I believe one of my co-workers then had the idea as to whether an Anti-Commintern Pact could not be concluded. I suggested this to the Fuehrer and the Fuehrer was in agreement and considered this a good thought. He did not wish, however, at that time, since it was an idealogical question, that it should be made in line with German official policies and politics and therefore instructed me to prepare this pact which then, I believe, in the year 1936, was concluded in my office in Berlin.

Q If I understood you correctly, this pact was concluded by you since you were the leader of the Department Ribbentrop?

A Yes, that is correct. The Department Ribbentrop consisted chiefly of my own person and a few collaborators. But it is correct to say that the Fuehrer wished that I conclude this pact since he did not wish to emphasize it publicly.

Q Dif this pact have real political aims or was it just for idealogical aims?

A It is, of course, true as a matter of basic principle that it had an idealogical aim. It was to combat the work of the Commintern in the various countries at that time. But this pact had political reasons and political background also and this political move was an anti-Russian one, since Moscow was the center for the Commintern. Therefore, it appeared to the Fuehrer and to me that through this pact a certain balance or counter-balance against Russian efforts or against Russia in a political sense, as such, was being created; that idealogically as well as politically --

THE PRESIDENT: Do you and the defendant really think it is necessary to take as long as the defendant has taken to tell us why he, as an ambassador in London was called upon to sign the Anti-Commintern Pact?

DR. HORN: It is very difficult for me to hear your Honor.

THE PRESIDENT: What I asked you was whether you and the defendant think it necessary for the defendant to make such a long speech in answer to your

H0096 - 0016

question; why was he as ambassador in London employed to sign the Anti-Comintern Pact. He has spoken for at least five minutes about it.

BY DR. HORN:

Q On the 4th of February, 1938, you were made Foreign Minister. Give the reasons for the appointment.

A I have already said that on the 4th of February, 1938, I was at Berlin. The Fuehrer asked me to come to him and told me that because of a change in various high places he contemplated a change of Foreign Minister also; that the then Foreign Minister von Neurath hadbeen made the president of another organization. I then replied to the Fuehrer that I, of course, would be glad to follow his suggestion.

Q At this opportunity did you receive a high rank in the SS? The Prosecution has claimed that this rank was not purely honorary. Can you give us the details on that?

A I must clarify this point, I believe. I had received a rank in the SS prior to this time and I do not recall whether it was at this appointment or at some other time when I was made SS Gruppenfuehrer. The Fuehrer granted me the rank and the uniform of an SS Gruppenfuehrer. That was a position I had formerly, or a rank a la suite, in the Army and at that time I agreed with the thoughts of the SS. My connections with Himmler were fairly good at the time. I saw in the aims of the SS at that time the possible basis for the establishment of an idealogical fuehrer group, such as perhaps we find in England and then later the Waffen SS had shown its bravery in war. Later my position and relation to Himmler changed.

The Fuehrer granted me this rank as he wished that at Party rallies and at Party meetings I would have the Party uniform and would have rank in the Party.

I ask that I be permitted to state briefly my position toward the Party. Yesterday or the day before yesterday the question was raised whether I was a typical National Socialist.

H0096 - 0017

I do not wish to judge in this connection, but it is certain that it was only in later years that I met Hitler. So far as National Socialist doctrines and the program were concerned, I did not concern myself with that too much. I did not know about their race theory. I was no anti-Semite; I did not understand the church question, although I had severed my church connections quite some time back, for my own spiritual reasons, in the early 20's, in the development of German church matters. However, I believe that I was a good Christian nevertheless.

What drew me to the Party were those things which I realized at that time. The Party wanted a strong, flourishing, and social Germany, and I wanted that too. For that reason, in the year 1932, I did, after full deliberation, become a member of the Party.

Q Before that time had you been in the service of the Party, as the prosecution claims, and especially since the year 1930?

A In 1930 the large Reichstag election occurred, in which National Socialism gained more than 100 seats in the Reichstag. I set forth yesterday, and perhaps do not need to repeat, just what the conditions in Germany were at that time.

However, in the year 1930, 1931 and 1932, I gradually approached the Party. I believe I entered the Party in August of 1932, and from that moment on, up until the end of this war, I devoted my entire power and strength to National Socialist Germany.

I would like to say frankly, before this Tribunal and before the world, that I was always interested and made every effort to be a good National Socialist, and that I was proud of the fact that I belonged to a small group of men, idealists, who did not want anything but to bring prestige back to Germany once more.

Q What foreign political problems did Hitler point out to you at your appointment, problems which had to be solved? What instructions did he give you for the carrying on of foreign policies?

A When I took over my office, the Fuehrer said relatively little to me. He said only that Germany had assumed a new position from that time on. Germany had once more entered the circle of nations and equality of rights,

H0096 - 0018

and it was to be clearly seen that certain problems would have to be solved in the future. He also said this especially, as I recall. I believe he mentioned four special problems which, sooner or later, would have to be solved. He emphasized that such problems could be solved only with a strong Wehrmacht, not in the using of this Wehrmacht, but in the existence of the Wehrmacht, because a country which was not strongly armed could not carry on foreign policies, as we had experienced it in previous years. A country like that was really operating in a vacuum. He said we would have to enter upon a clear-cut relationship with our neighbors.

The four problems which he enumerated were, first of all, Austria; then he mentioned the solution of the Sudeten question; he spoke about Memel Land; he spoke about Danzig and the Corridor. He mentioned these as problems which would have to be solved in one way or another, and it was to be my task to assist him diplomatically.

From this moment on my efforts were always to assist the Fuehrer in the preparation of a solution of these problems, as he had expressed it to me, in a German sense.

THE PRESIDENT: I believe this would be a good time to break off.

(A recess was taken.)

H0096 - 0019

Q In what way, after you were named foreign minister, did foreign policy continue?

A At that time I tried first of all to achieve a clear, over-all view of the business of the foreign office. German foreign policy, as I said before, had reached a certain point, namely, the point at which Germany had again achieved prestige in the eyes of the world. It was now a question of solving the important and basis problems that had resulted from the Versailles Treaty in Europe. This was all the more necessary as, for instance, the question of Volkstum led again to conflicts and thereby prevented peaceful solutions.

In the period following I familiarized myself with business of the foreign ministry. That was at first not easy, as I was dealing with altogether new men.

I should like to mention here that Hitler did not always have a positive attitude toward the foreign office, and in the further pursuance of my efforts and of the efforts of my predecessor I saw it as my most important task to bring the foreign office closer to Hitler and to strike a bridge between the two fields.

It was clear to me from the very beginning after I took over the ministry that I was working under a certain shadow and that certain limitation were placed upon me -- that is to say, that I would not be in a position to so conduct the foreign policy as a foreign minister might otherwise be expected to do who was responsible to a parliament in a parliamentary system. The enormous personality of the Fuehrer dominated foreign policy, of course. He concerned himself with it in all detail.

Things developed so that, on my hand, I gave him the most important foreign policy reports through a liaison man, and he in turn gave me certain tasks, etc.

In the course of these talks crystallized at first and foremost the problem of Austria, which had to find some solution or other. Austria was from the very beginning a matter very close to the Fuehrer's heart, because he was an Austrian himself -- had been -- and it was of course clear that with the growing power of Germany the efforts that had existed for a long time for a closer connection between Germany and Austria would be carried

H0096 - 0020

out even more strongly than before. At that time I was not so familiar with this problem, since the situation was such that Hitler handled this problem personally.

Q When you took over your office, or later, did you know of a memorandum dealing with a conference that took place on the 5th of November 1937 that is here referred to as the "Hoszbach" document?

A This document, which has been spoken of here several times, I did'n know of. I saw it here for the first time.

Q Did Hitler say anything in the spirit of this document to you ?

A I do not recall all the details of the contents of that document, but it was the Fuehrer's practice to speak with me very little about his goals and intentions. At any rate, he did so toward me very slightly. He did speak of the fact that Germany had to solve certain problems in Europe -- as I have already said -- and that for this reason it was necessary to be strong. He also spoke of the possibility that in this matter it could come to some sort of a showdown, but he told me nothing more specific about this, On the contrary, he always emphasized to me that it was his wish to solve these problems which had to be solved by way of diplomacy, and that once he had solved these problems he had the intention of creating what he called an ideal "Folk State" and that he would thereby create a model modern social state. In other words, to me he did mention the possibility of a military settlement, but he stated to me as his highest goal that it was his intention to achieve this solution of the impossibility of Versailles, as he called them, in a peaceful way,

Q After your appointment as foreign minister you were called to Berchtesgaden to speak with Hitler and Schuschnigg. What was discussed there and what was your role at this conference?

A I see that this is on the 12th of February 1938. Hitler then informed me that he was going to confer with federal chancellor Schuschnigg at Berchtesgaden. I see from my notes that this was on the 12th of February. In the meantime he told me what the solution was that he was pursuing and that in some form or other the German National Socialists in Austria must be assisted.

H0096 - 0021

Difficulties of all sorts had arisen there, the details of which I no longer recall. At any rate, there were a number of National Socialtist in jail and as a consequence of the natural efforts of these people to bring about a social union between Austria and the Reich, these Austrian problems threatened to become a really serios source of difficulty between Germany and Austria.

Adolf Hitler told me then that I should be present at Berchtesgaden.

Then later discussions took place, and I have heard here that Adolf Hitler had asserted that he intended -- I believe this was in the year 1938 -- to achieve the rights of self-determination that these six million Austrian Germans had. I did not know about this personally.

At the meetinf with Schschnigg on the Obersalzberg I was present. Hitler received Schuschnigg alone and had a long conversation with him. Details about this conversation are not known to me because I was not present at it. I recall that Schuschnigg after this talk met me, and that I in my turn had a long conversation with him.

Q At that time did you, as the Prosecution asserts, put Schuschnigg under political presure?

A No, My conversation with Schuschnigg -- I remember it very clearly whereas the other details of other meetings on the Obersalzberg are not so clear in my memory, since I was not present at either the first or the second meeting between Schuschnigg and Hitler.

During the talk that I had with Schuschnigg everything went along in a very friendly way. I felt that Schuschnigg had received a very strong impression from Hitler and the Fuehrer's personality.

I must say first of all that I do not know the details of what Hitler discussed with Schuschnigg, so that I could not speak to him about this matter -- or at least only very little. The talk confined itself to more general themes. I told Schuschmigg that in my opinion, these two countries must come closely together and that it was his historical task to assist in this.

H0096 - 0022

Both nations were German by nature, and two such nations could not for long be held separate by artificial means.

Q. Was there any mention of the German-Austrian Treaty of 1936 at this conference?

A. I did not speak to Schuschnigg on this point.- I believe also that the Fuehrer did not either, because according to what Schuschnigg said to me, the Fuehrer -- I don't know the details -- the Fuehrer talked to him to this effect: That certain measures would have to be carried out in Austria in order to obviate the reason for conflict between the two countries.

As I said, my talk with him was very friendly, and may I remark that I expressed to Schuschnigg the thought that the two countries should enter into closer relations. Schuschnigg adopted to me an altogether positive attitude so that at that time to a certain extent I was surprised by this positive attitude on his part.

There can be no talk of any pressure on Schuschnigg during our discussion. The discussion of the Fuehrer with him I believe was conducted in perfectly open terms, because the Fuehrer wanted, in the interest of obviating these problems between the two countries, to reach some improvement in relations; and if this was to be done then statesmen must be open and frank with one another.

I have heard here -- and I think this is based on an entry in Jodl's Diary -- that heavy military and political pressure was exerted. I believe I can testify here that I knew nothing of any military or political pressure at this meeting between Schuschnigg and Hitler. I may reiterate, certainly the Fouhrer spoke perfectly frankly with Schuschnigg, but there can be no question of a pressure of a military nature or of a political nature, nor can there be any question of an ultimatum of any sort.

I also believe that Jodl's remark -- I don't believe he was present -- it was perhaps only a notation in his diary that he had from hearsay.

I should like to add that at that time -- and I have also stated this to many people, including the Fuehrer -- I had an altogether pleasand and positive impression of Schuschnigg's personality. Schuschnigg indeed spoke of the fact

H0096 - 0023

that the two countries -- and I remember his words very exactly -- were fatefully bound together, and that he would have to assist in some way to bring these two countries closer together. There was no talk in this discussion of Anschluss or any such thing. Whether the Fuehrer mentioned that I don't know, but I don't believe so.

Q. At that time, or shortly after, did the Fuehrer speak to you about an intention to depart from the German-Austrian Treaty of 1936 and wished to find some other solution?

A. Hitler did not speak to me about this. On the question of Austria in toto I spoke very little with him. This may sound remarkable, but it can be understood from the fact that it was only on the 4th of February that I took over the foreign office, and I first had to work my way into all the problems. The Austrian problem was, as I already said, a problem with which Hilter concerned himself personally, which, consequently, was simply taken note of in the Foreign Ministry, and it was directed by him personally.

I remember also that von Papen then had the right to turn directly to Hitler, and the Foreign Office only received copies of his report. These reports were presented immediately to Hitler by the Reich Chancellory, so that the Foreign Office had nothing to do with them.

Q. You then went back to London in order to take your leave as Ambassador. What did you hear in London regarding the development of the Austrian question?

A. I may say the following in this connection: I personally could see a solution of the Austrian problem of this sort: That the two countries should have a customs union, as I personally believed that in this way the problem could be solved in its most natural way and close relations could be brought about between the two countries. I might remind you at this point that this thought of a customs union was already an old one and had already been proposed by governments before Hitler's, and I believe because of the interference of allied countries it was not brought about.

According to my notes, on the 8th of March I went to London. The situation then was this, as I have already mentioned. On the event of the celebration of the taking over of power on the 30th of January, I was in Berlin. Then on

H0096 - 0024

the 4th of February I was appointed Foreign Minister. Because of this appoint-- ment I did not have opportunity to take official leave from London. On the 8th of March 1938, I returned to London.

Before taking leave I had a short conversation with Hitler, primarily about English matters. I remember that he remarked on this occasion that the Austrian problem was progressing very nicely in the direction that had been discussed at Berchtesgaden with Schuschnigg. I must say that I did not know of what agreements had been reached in all the details.

I remember a small detail which I was informed of by our Austrian liaison men. I reached London, and in the afternoon I heard, more or less by accident, over the radio in the legation building, a speech which the then Federal Chancellor Schuschnigg made in Innsbruck. I don't want to go into detail, that would take too long. I do know that the entire manner, and as it seemed to me, also the tone of this speech, was such that I immediately got the notion that the Fuehrer would not tolerate this; and that the entire speech, without any doubt, stood in contradiction to the spirit with which the conferences had been carried out on the Obersalzberg.

I, as I said before, was of the conviction that Adolf Hitler would undertake something, and I should like to say this also, perfectly openly, before this Tribunal. It appeared quite correct to me that the solution of this problem would take some form or other. We had to talk very openly with Schuschnigg in order to prevent things from coming to a catastrophe, even a European catastrophe.

Then on the next morning I had a long discussion with Lord Halifax. Lord Halifax had also received reports from Austria, and I attempted, without knowing very much about the situation, to persuade him that it would be better to solve this problem now in one form or another, and that it was precisely to the interest of German-English efforts toward friendship that this solution should take place now. It would be false to believe that the friendship between Germany and England that both of us were striving for would thereby be damaged.

H0096 - 0025

Lord Halifax listened to me quietly and told me that I should later have the opportunity to speak with the Prime Minister Chanberlain the next morning at breakfast. Subsequently a breakfast was arranged with Chanberlain, and after this breakfast I had a long talk with Chamberlain. In this conference Mr. Chamberlain again emphasized his desire to reach an understanding with Germany. I was extraordinarily happy to hear this, and told him that I was of the firm conviction that this was also the Fuehrer's attitude. He gave me a specific message to the Fuehrer, that this was his attitude, and that he would do everything he could in this direction.

Shortly after this discussion telegrams arrived from Austria, I believe from the English consul. Chamberlain and Lord Halifax asked me -- I believe the breakfast was in 10 Downing Street -- to come to their office in order to discuss these telegrams. I told him of course I had no precise reports, no knowledge of an ultimatum, and then later of the entrance of German troops. We arranged that we would maintain connections and would meet later, and that Lord Halifax would come to the German Embassy later to discuss these things further.

H0096 - 0026

I must emphasize here, too, Mr. Chamberlain had beenvery quiet and it seemed to me, had a reasonable attitude towards the Austrian question. In the afternoon, Lord Halifax visited me and we had a long talk. In the meantime, the entrance of German troops had become known. I should like to emphasize the fact that this talk with Lord Halifax was very friendly and that at the conclusion of it, I invited the English Foreign Minister to a visit to Germany again. He said that he would be glad to come and perhaps another hunting party could be arranged.

Q Did you on the next morning have a telephone conversation with the defendant Goering? This telephone conversation has been put in evidence by the prosecution, with the assertion that it is a sign of the double-tongued policy that you were carrying out?

A Reichsmarshal Goering has already testified that this was a diplomat conversation and diplomatic conversations are carried on all over the world in the same way but I may say here that through this telephone conversation, I found out for the first time the real details of this Austrian affair. Without going into details I heard, above all, that this vote did not correspond to the real will of the Austrian people and a number of other points which I asked Goering to mention in his conversations with the English ministers; but I should like to say that for practical purposes, these discussions did not take place later because as I was taking leave from official English circles, on the basis of the talks I had with Goering, I had no further talks with Goering but sometime after, a short time after my telephone conversation with Goering, left London and went to Berlin and later to Vienna. I might say that first I went to Karin Hall to visit Goering and spoke with him there regarding the Anschluss--not about the Anschluss but about the whole development of circumstances in Austria. He was just as happy about this as I was. We all were happy. I flew, then, on the same day to Vienna and arrived there at about the same time as Hitler. I heard, in the meantime, about the Anschluss and it was in Vienna that I first heard that the thought of the Anschluss occurred to Hitler only during his travels through Austria. I believe it was on the occasion of a demonstration in Linz that this thought came to him and then, I think, he

H0096 - 0027

rapidly made up his mind to carry on the Anschluss.

Q What problems did Hitler define to you as those that had to be first solved in the question of the Anschluss?

A The first problem that Hitler outlined to me was the question of the Sudeten Germans but this problem was not a problem emanating from the foreign office or Hitler or any office -- it was a problem that simply developed from itself. I believe it was the American prosecutor who told me, who said here that with the annexation of Czechoslovakia, a chapter had reached its conclusion that was shameful in the whole history of the relation between people, namely the destruction of the small Czechoslovak people. I should like to state the following from my own knowledge of these matters. One may speak perhaps of a Czechoslovakian State but not of the Czechoslovak people. This was a State, a nationality State, that contained the most heterogeneous folk groups. There were, besides Czechs, Germans, Hungarians, Poles, Ruthenians, and Carpatho-Ukrainians. It was in itself a heterogeneous collection of elements that had been welded together in 1919 to form Czechoslovakia. It is certain, and a historical fact, that the efforts, of the different nationalities within the State were directed towards different aims and it was therefore necessary to surround the State with a so-called "iron ring". This pressure created counter-pressure on the part of the various peoples with the state and it is entirely clear that a strong Germany, a Germany of National Socialism at that time was interested in all the folk groups, forall the folk groups that bordered on Germany, and also had a great influence on these folk groups. It thus happened that the German minorities in the Sudetenland, who, since 1919, had been submitted to a considerable pressure on the part of Prague, now were submitted to an even greater pressure. I do not believe I have to enter into any details but I know, from my own knowledge and even from personal discussion that took place during my ambassadorship in London, that the question of the Sudeten-land was a very clear concept of the Foreign Office in London and that it was precisely England that very often before 1936 had come out in favor of certain demands made by the Sudeten Germans, demands as expressed by Conrad Henlein.

H0096 - 0028

After the seizure of power of Adolf Hitler, undoubtedly the supression of these German minorities increased. I should also like to point out-- and I know this from having read the files of the Foreign Office--that the League of Nations' Committee for Minorities had collected the vast amount of material on the Sudeten question and knew something of the pressure to which Germans were submitted in their efforts to pursue their own cultural life. I do not believe it is too much to say that the manner in which the Sudeten Germans were treated by Prague was, in the opinion of the League of Nations' experts, in no way in accord with the provisions in the League of Nations' Charter regarding minorities. I, myself, say that it was absolutely necessary, in order that this problem should not result in conflict, that again, as in the case of Austria, we would have to reach some solution. I should like to emphasize that the Foreign Office and I were always concenred, from the very beginning, to solve the Sudeten problem by way of diplomatic negotiations with the main signatory powers of Versailles, and I may add that it was my personal conviction, which I also expressed to Hitler, that if we had time enough and treated it correctly, the Germany that we had in 1938 could have solved this problem in a diplomatic and peaceful way.

H0096 - 0029

The Prosecution has charged me with having brought about disturbances in Czechoslovakia in illegal ways, and thus having brought about the culmination of this crisis. I do not deny that between the Sudeten German Party and the National Socialist Party there had long been connections which were directed to the preservation of Sudeten German interests. I also do not wish to deny, for example, what was here mentioned, that the Sudeten German Party was supported financially by the Reich. I believe that that was an open secret that was also pretty well known in Prague.

However, it is not correct that anything was done on the part of the Foreign Office and myself to so direct these efforts that from the direction taken serious disturbances would arise.

I do not want to go into further detail, but I should like to mention one point. Documents have been mentioned about mistreatment of Czech nationals in Germany as reprisals for Czech treatment of Germans. I can only say to that that these were measures that could only be understood in that context, but they were not brought about by us in the Foreign Office in order to make the situation more critical, but rather on the contrary.

In the further course of events, I attempted to understand the Sudeten German Party better, and also attempted to restrain it in its relations with Prague.

The documents that I found out about for the first time here also clearly demonstrate that. I don't have these documents here, so I cannot go into them in greater detail, but I believe that perhaps the Defense has the opportunity of seeing them.

Q How did the critical situation in the summer arise?

A Such a people had, as is natural, its own dynamic. This question of the German groups that bordered on Germany was often called by us in the Foreign Office "the mysterious problem." This problem could not so be solved by the Foreign Office as foreign policy would seem to demand. It was not a question here of world powers, but of living people who had their own dynamic. The situation was this, that the Sudeten German Party strove for greater and greater independence, and it cannot be disputed that a number of responsible leaders demanded absolute autonomy, if not, indeed, the possibility of joining

H0096 - 0030

the Reich. This is entirely clear, and that was also the goal of the Sudeten German Party.

For the Foreign Office and for Hitler, of course, difficulties arose in this. But then, as I have already said, the attempt was made to restrain these efforts. At that time, I received Conrad Henlein once or twice -- I don't remember how often -- and asked him not to do anything in the pursuit of these political goals that might put German foreign policy under any obligation. This, of course, was perhaps not always easy for Henlein, and I know that the leaders of the Sudeten German Party were received in other offices of the Reich and that Adolf Hitler also interested himself in this problem and on occasion received Henlein.

The whole situation thus came to a more and more critical and crucial development because on the one hand the Sudeten Germans made their demands more and more strongly at Prague; the Czech Government opposed these demands, and in this way excesses took place, arrests and so on. Thus matters became more and more critical.

At thattime, I often spoke with the Czech Ambassador. I asked him to be as generous as he could towards the efforts of the Sudeten German Party, but matters developed in such a direction that the attitude on the part of Prague became stubborn and the Sudeten Germans more demanding.

Q How did Chamberlain's visit then come about? What were the reasons for it and the role that you played on that occasion?

A I should like to interpolate here the fact that in the summer of 1938 things were moving more and more toward a crisis of some sort. Ambassador Sir Nevile Henderson, with whom I had often spoken and who was making efforts on his part to improve conditions, undoubtedly made continuous reports to his government. I no longer know precisely, but I believe that it was through his initiative that Lord Runciman made his visit to Prague. Runciman undoubtedly acted in good faith, and he also received a recommendation which, as far as I recall, was to the effect that the right of self-determination of the Sudetenland could not fail to be recognized. Nevertheless, the crisis was there.

I don't remember exactly what the date was, but I believe it happened that through Ambassador Henderson, Chamberlain got in touch with the Reich

H0096 - 0031

Government. In this way it happened that in the first half of September Chamberlain visited the Fuehrer on the Obersalzburg.

Regarding this visit, not very much can be said. The Fuehrer spoke alone with Chamberlain at that time. I do know, however, that we all felt that this was carried out in an altogether good and pleasant atmosphere. So far as I can now recall, the Fuehrer told me then that he had told Chamberlain frankly that the demand of the Sudeten Germans for self-determination and freedom would have to be met in some form or other. Chamberlain -- and this was the substance of that conference -- answered that he would inform the British Cabinet of these German wishes and would get in touch with Hitler later.

Q How did the second visit of Chamberlain to Godesberg then come about?

A So far as I recall, matters did not progress satisfactorily. The situation in the Sudetenland became more difficult and threatened to develop into a very serious crisis, not only within Czechoslovakia but also between Germany and Czechoslovakia, and into a European crisis. Thus it came about anew that Chamberlain took the initiative and in the middle of September visited Godesberg.

Q How, then, was the Sudeten question solved, and what was your part in this solution?

A I might first report regarding Godesberg. In Godesberg, Hitler, in view of the crisis that had developed, informed Chamberlain that now he had to have a solution of this question under any circumstances. I may emphasize that I knew nothing regarding details of a military nature at that time, but I do know that the Fuehrer concerned himself with the possibility that this problem might also be solved militarily. He said in Godesberg to Mr. Chamberlain that a solution of the Sudeten German problems would have to be found as rapidly as possible. Mr. Chamberlain was of the opinion that it would be difficult to persuade Prague to a quick solution, and finally things bogged down altogether in the conference.

H0096 - 0032

Adolf Hitler dictated a memorandum which I was give to Chamberlain. Then Sir Horace Wilson, who was a friend of Chamberlain, visited me and I made arrangements for a new meeting.

During this meeting, which started with a rather cool atmosphere, the Fuehrer received a report of Czechoslovakia's mobilization. This was a most deplorable circumstance since Hitler felt that very strongly and both he and Chamberlain wanted to interrupt the conference.

I then had a short conversation with Chamberlain and Hitler and I know that negotiations were undertaken. After a few hours of negotiations the result was the Chamberlain told the Fuehrer he could see now that something would have to be done and he was ready, on his part, to submit this memorandum to the British cabinet. I believe he also said that he would recommend to the British Cabinet, that is to say his ministerial colleagues, that the memorandum should be recommended to Prague. The contents of the memorandum suggested, as a general solution, the annexation of the Sudetenland by Prague. I believe the Fuehrer stated in the memorandum his wish that in view of the critical situation there, it would be advisable that it should be decided upon within a certain period of time -- by the first of October, which was ten or fourteen days from that time.

Mr. Chamberlain then departed and a few days passed. The crisis did not improve but became worse. I remember that very well. Then, during the latter part of September, the French Ambassador reported to me and said that he had a report in regard to the Sudetenland question to bring to me, and later, the British Ambassador came. At the same time, Goering has already testified to this, Italy entered into the negotiations on the wish of Mussolini and offered to mediate. Mussolini proposed that a conference be held which should be attended by England, France and Germany, and this proposal was accepted.

The French Ambassador showed the Fuehrer and he showed them on a map the probable solution which could be reached between England, France and Germany, this being the solution that he had thought out for the Sudetenland problem. The French Ambassador stated this solution was not satisfactory and further discussions would have to be conducted regarding the question as to exactly how far Sudetenland extended and what the German population was in certain places.

H0096 - 0033

It came then to the Munich conference -- I need not go into the details of this conference, I should like only to describe briefly the results of it. The Fuehrer explained to the statesmen, with the aid of a map, the necessity of the question and which part of the Sudetenland would have to be annexed to Germany. Discussions arose and the Italian Chief of State, Mussolini, agreed in general with Hitler's ideas. The English Prime Minister at first made certain counter-proposals and spoke of the fact that perhaps this could be discussed in detail with the Czechs. Daladier, the French Prime Minister, said, so far as I recall, that he thought that once these proposals had been entered upon the Four Great Powers could reach a solution and finally, at the conclusion of the four statements we were of this opinion and the Munich Agreement was drawn up in which the Sudetenland -- in which it was decided that the Sudetenland should be annexed to Germany as outlined on the map that was there.

The Fuehrer was very pleased at this solution, and I should like to emphasize that here particularly. I also was happy, particularly in view of other versions of this matter that I have heard during the Trial here. We were very happy that this matter had been solved in this way.

THE PRESIDENT: We will sit again at 2:00 o'clock.

(The Tribunal adjourned until 1400 hours.)

File
H0096 - 0034

Official transcript of the International Military Tribunal in the matter of the United States of America, the French Republic, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics against Hermann Wilhelm Goering et al, Defendants, sitting at Nurnberg, Germany, on 29 March 1946, 1400-1700, Lord Justice Lawrence presiding.

THE PRESIDENT: The Tribunal will sit tomorrow morning at ten o'clock until one in open session. And, now, before going on, Dr. Horn, the Tribunal wishes me to say that they think that entirely too much time is being taken up by the defendant in detailed accounts of negotiations which led up to an agreement, which is a matter of history, and which is perfectly well known to everybody. That is not the case which the defendant has to meet. What the defendant has to meet is not the making of agreements which are perfectly well known, but the breach of those agreements by Germany and any part which he may have played in the breach of those agreements. It is very important that the time of this Tribunal should not be taken up by unnecessary detail of that sort.

DIRECT EXAMINATION - continued.

BY DR. HORN:

Q. What foreign political reaction did the Munich agreement have?

A. The Munich agreement, as is well known, contained the following: That Germany and England would not wage war; that by the naval agreement the ratio of 100 to 35 is to be maintained and that in important matters consultations were to be resorted to. Through this agreement, undoubtedly, the atmosphere between Germany and England was cleared up to a certain degree. It was to be expected and hoped that the consequences of this pact would bring about a final understanding. This appointment was really very great when a few days after Munich, rearmament at any price was made known in England. Then England started on a policy of close relationship with France and a working together in November of 1938. Commercial measures were taken towards Germany, and in December of '38, the British secretary for colonies made a speech, in which he was against any revision of the colonial question.

H0096 - 0035

There were negotiations with the United States of America under consideration, also, and our reports, as I remember them, showed an increase of the stiffening of the English position towards Germany, and the impression was created in Germany of politics which practically would limit Germany.

Q. You are accused by the Prosecution of having acted against International Law for the solution of the Czechoslovakian question in separating the two states, the Czech and the Slovanian state. What part did you take in the solution of this problem?

A. There is no doubt that the efforts that were being made between Slovakia and other members of the National Socialist Party were known to the Foreign Office, and it would be wrong to say that we were unsympathetic to the stand. But it is not correct to say that the atonomy of the state was to be attacked. I remember that Dr. Tiso proclaimed this atonomy, and the Prague Government wished to recognize and did recognize the atonomy. As circumstance were at that time after Munich one can see from the fact that all national parts of Czechoslovakia were interested in atonomy and independence. Shortly thereafter the tripartite group made known its independence and some of the other groups made similar efforts in that behalf. After the Munich agreement, I would like to add that there was a clause in this agreement, according to which Germany and Italy would give Czechoslovakia a guarantee, but this declaration was never made. The reason for that was that Poland, according to the Munich agreement, or after it, sent an ultimatum to Czechoslovakia so that the Polish minorities of their own account would be separated and these areas were occupied by Poland. The Hungarians also wanted atonomy of a connection with Hungary. The situation in Czechoslovakia was not clear at that time and took form along difficult lines.

Then the Slovak, Tuka, came to us. He wanted to win Germany for the independence of Czechoslovakia. He wanted Germany to approve a step like that. The Fuehrer received Tuka at that time and, after a few preliminary remarks, the declaration of independence of Slovakia resulted, and that was on the 13th of March.

H0096 - 0036

The Prosecution has submitted a document, in which I am alleged to have said, in this conversation which took place between the Fuehrer and Tuka, that it was only a matter of hours, instead of days, in which Czechoslovakia would have to make a decision. However, it was to be interpreted at that time that on the part of Hungary preparations for an invasion were present in order to occupy some of the regions of Czechoslovakia. We wanted to prevent this, and Hitler was of the opinion that there might be a war between Czechoslovakia and Hungary, and he gladly agreed with the wish of Tiso. Later, after the declaration of independence of Czechoslovakia, he agreed upon Tito's request, and took over the protection of Czechoslovakia.

H0096 - 0037

Q What were some of the preceding events of Hacha's visit to Berlin on the 14th of March, 1933?

A Events in Czechoslovakia had their repercussions, of course, and chiefly with regard to Hitler those excesses against Volksdeutsche in the region of Prague, Bruenn and Biglau and other distficts. Many fled to the Reich.

In the winter of 1938-39 I repeatedly attempted to discuss these matters with the Prague Government. Hitler was of the opinion and of the conviction that any negotiations that might be started in Prague would not be tolerated by the German Reich. The Fuehrer wished that Czechoslovakia would reduce its military power but this was denied by Prague. In these months I tried repeatedly to keep and maintain good relations between Germany and Prague, above all. I spoke frequently with Chvalkovski, the Slovakian Foreign Minister and in March Chvalkovski turned to our German representative in Prague to find out whether Hitler would grant Hacha a personal interview. I reported this to the Fuehrer and the Fuehrer agreed to receive Hacha. He then told me that he wished to deal with this matter personally. To that effect there was an exchange of wires with Prague; that a reserved attitude should be taken but that the Fuehfer would receive Hacha.

I would like to mention briefly that the Foreign Office and myself did not receive information of military plans. We found out about these things only shortly before these things took place, just a few days before.

Before the arrival of Hacha I asked the Fuehrer whether a treaty or agreement was to be prepared. The Fuehrer answered as I recall distinctly that he was of the opinion that we should go much beyond that.

After the arrival of Hacha in Berlin I visited him and I recall that he told me that he wanted to put the fate of Czechoslovakia -- that he wanted to put the fate of this country into the Fuehrer's hands. I told the Fuehre about this and the Fuehrer instructed me to prepare an agreement. The draf was submitted to him and Hacha was received by the Fuehrer and the contents of this conference as far as I know is already known and has been presented in documentary form so I do not have to go into it in detail.

H0096 - 0038

I know that Adolf Hitler at that time spoke clearly to Hacha and explained to him that he intended to occupy Czechoslovakia. He was concerned with the old historic territory which he intended to put under his protection. The Czechs were to have their complete economy and their own life and he believed that the decision which was being made at that time would work out to be very fortunate for the Czech people. Shortly thereafter I had a long discussion with the Foreign Minister Chvalkovski. He was agreeable to our point of view and I asked him to persuade Hacha to that effect so that the Fuehrer's decision and the whole action involved could be carried through without the shedding of blood.

I believe Hacha got a strong impression of the Fuehrer and of the things which Hitler told him, which caused him to get in touch with his government in Prague. He got in touch with them by phone -- I believe with the Chief of Staff although I do not know this exactly -- and then got the approval of his government so that the agreement which I have already mentioned could be concluded. This agreement was then signed by Hitler, Hacha, the Foreign Minister and myself. Then Hacha, as I recall, gave instructions that the German Army was to be received cordially and as far as I am informed, the occupation of Czechoslovakia, that is Bohemia and Moravia, took place without incident of any sort.

After the occupation I traveled to Prague with the Fuehrer. In Prague, after the occupation, the Fuehrer gave me a proclamation, which declared that the countries of Bohemia and Moravia were to be protectorates of the Reich. This proclamation was a surprise to me and I read this proclamation in Prague. No protest of any sort was made according to my recollection and I believe I might mention that the occupation of Bohemia and Moravia, the Fuehrer considered necessary and in the best interests of the Reich and the occupation took place also for historical and economic reasons and above all for security reasons. I believe that Goering has touched on these points.

Q How did you see the European situation at the time of the taking over of the rest of Czechoslovakia?

A I might say that after the proclamation at Prague I had a rather lengthy discussion with the Fuehrer. I pointed out to the Fuehrer that this occupation, of course, would have important

H0096 - 0039

repercussions with the British and French. In this connection I would like to add that in England those circles which had taken a position against Germany had grown larger and were led by imp rtant personalities.

In this connection I would like to return and mention briefly one incident which took place while I was still Ambassador in London. I had a visit from Winston Churchill at the Embassy. Mr. Winston Churchill was not in Parliament at that time and I believe he was not leader of the opposition but he was one of the most significant personalities in England. I was especially interested in arranging a meeting between him and Adolf Hitler and had asked Churchill to come to see me at the Embassy for that reason. We had a conversation which lasted many hours and a conversation which I recall exactly. I believe it would take us too far afield to mention all details covered in this conversation. But, as Lord Vansittart in 1936 --

THE PRESIDENT: Documents with reference to Mr. Winston Churchill at this time when he was not a member of the government have already been ruled by the Tribunal to be irrelevant and what he said and such a conversation as this appears to the Tribunal to be absolutely irrelevant and the Tribunal will not hear it.

A (continued) I have already said that I called the attention of the Fuehrer to the British reaction. Hitler told me and explained to me the necessity of the occupation of Bohemia and Moravia, especially on historic and strategic grounds. I remember that in this connection he cited the French Minister of Aviation Pierre Cot, that Czechoslovakia would be a mother-ship against Germany and I believe at that time we received intelligence and records of Russian fleets and Russian missions on Czech airdromes. Hitler said, and I remember these words distinctly, that he could not have a foreign Czechoslovakian thorn in German flesh. One could get along really well with Czechoslovakia but it was important that Germany have in her hands the protection of these countries. He mentioned further Soviet Russia as a factor of inestimable power if it were allied with Czechoslovakia. When I mentioned England he said that England was in no position to take over the protection of the Germans in Czechoslovakia and the Czech State and its structure had spli asunder and it was in the interest of German-English relations and he also considered it necessary that the countries of Bohemia and Moravia be in very close contact with the Reich. A protectorate seemed to be the best answer to this proble

H0096 - 0040

Hitler further said it would be of the utmost unimportance to England, and for Germany this question was absolutely vital. At once glance at the map -- and he used these exact words -- he "couldn't see how this occupation could disturb collaboration between Germany and England.

He further mentioned that England had about 600 dominions or protectorates and could therefore understand that such problems would have to be solved.

I told Hitler about the difficulties which Mr. Chamberlain personally might have from the steps which were being taken by Germany, that England might consider that Germany was increasing very strongly in power, but the Fuehrer explained the whole question to me with the reasons I have already just mentioned.

The English reaction was, first of all, positive in the House of Commons. Chamberlain said it wasn't a violation of the Munich agreement and the British Government was not tied to an obligation. The Czech State was decomposed and the guarantee which England had given was not to be invoked, or the obligation to carry through the guarantee did not apply.

I might say that all of us were glad that this position was taken in England. I believe it was two or three days later when Mr.--

THE PRESIDENT (interposing): What have we to do with the reactions in England unless they took the form of a note? I don't see what it has to do with it. What we want to know is the part the defendant Ribbentrop played in the breach of the Munich agreement.

DR. HORN: The defendant von Ribbentrop is accused of having participated in a conspiracy in the person of Foreign Minister, and that the conduct of carrying through foreign political activity was connected with aggressive war. If and when he is to defend himself against these charges he must picture circumstances as he saw them and to enumerate the motives which ruled him. He must be in a position to enumerate them, and I am asking him questions only about things which determined his views and opinions.

THE PRESIDENT: I don't think you asked him any question about it.

THE INTERPRETER: It is not coming through quite audibly.

THE PRESIDENT: What I said was, I didn't think you asked him any questions as to the reactions in England.

H0096 - 0041

THE INTERPRETER: The channels seems to be disturbed in some way. I think he is getting more than one language.

THE PRESIDENT: Can you hear me now?

DR. HORN: Now I can hear.

THE PRESIDENT: Can Doctor Horn hear?

DR. HORN: Now there are two languages on the same channel. French is one of the languages I get on this channel. There are still two languages on this channel. (Pause)

I can still hear two languages including German. (Pause)

Now I can hear German. Now I can hear French. (Pause)

I can still hear French.

THE PRESIDENT: Is it coming through now?

DR. HORN: Yes.

I can still hear another voice, a second voice, your Honor.

There are still two languages on the same channel, your Honor.

(Pause)

Just now we had two German voices, a lady's voice and gentleman's. Now I can hear a gentleman speaking French.

THE PRESIDENT: The Tribunal had better adjourn, I think.

(A recess was taken.)

H0096-0042

THE PRESIDENT: Dr. Horn, what I was attempting to say to you when the system broke down was that it seems to the Tribunal that the defendant ought to be able to keep his evidence within stricter limits and not to go into so much detail; and that with regard to the reactions -- the political reactions-- in England, they are not relevant in themselves, and any bearing which they may have upon the case is really remote.

BY DR. HORN:

Q What persuaded Hitler to commission you, in October of 1938, to enter into negotiations with Poland?

A There had always been the minority problem in Poland, which had caused great difficulties. Despite the agreement of 1934, this situation had not changed. In the year 1938 these measures against German minorities were continued by Poland. Germany wanted, with Poland, and with other countries, to reach some definite clarification. Consequently I was told, I believe during October 1938, to discuss, with the Polish Ambassador, a definite clarification of the problems between Germany and Poland.

Q Besides the minority problem, what other problems were there?

A There were two questions. One, the minority problem, was the most burning one; and the second problem was the question of Danzig and the Corridor, that is to say, a connection with East Prussia.

Q What was Hitler's attitude toward the Danzig and Corridor questions?

A It is clear that these two questions were the problems that had caused the greatest difficulty since Versailles, and Hitler had to solve these problems one way or another. I, too, embraced the point of view that Danzig was under continual pressure on the part of Poland. It was being made more and more Polish. In October of 1938, from 800,000 to a million Germans left the Corridor and returned to Germany.

Q How did the Polish Ambassador accept your suggestions in October 1938?

A The Polish Ambassador was reticent at first, he did not commit himself, nor could he. Also, I brought the problem to him in such a way that he could discuss it in all peacefulness with his government, and did not ask for a definitive answer from him. He said that he saw great difficulties

H0096 - 0043

with reference to Danzig, and also that a connection between Germany and East Prussia was difficult.

As I said, he was very reticent, and the discussion ended with his promise to communicate my statements to his government and to give me an answer as soon as possible.

Q On the 17th of November, 1938, how did your second discussion end?

A On the 17th of November, 1938, Lipski came to me and stated that the problem had great difficulties connected with it and that Poland considered the Danzig question particularly difficult.

Q Did you then ask Lipski to step into direct negotiations with Foreign Minister Beck?

A At that time I invited Foreign Minister Beck to Berlin.

Q Then when did Beck come to Berlin?

A Unfortunately, Beck did not come to Berlin; rather, he went to London.

Q You misunderstood my question. When did Foreign Minister Beck come to Berchtesgaden?

A Hitler had said that he would be glad to speak with Beck personally about this problem. Thereupon -- I don't know the date exactly, but I believe it was the beginning of January -- he came to Berchtesgaden and had a long talk with Adolf Hitler.

Q What was the result of this talk?

A I was present at that conversation. The result was that Adolf Hitler informed Beck of all details of his wish for good German-Polish relations. He said that a completely new solution would have to be found regarding Danzig, and the connection with East Prussia should carry no great difficulty.

Beck told the Fuehrer that the question of Danzig, because of the Vistula, had difficulties connected with it, but he would devote himself to the problem in all its details. He did not repudiate any discussion of this problem, but rather, he pointed out the difficulties which, because of the Polish attitude, made a solution of the problem difficult.

Q Is it correct that Beck was absolutely ready to carry on negotiations

H0096 - 0044

and that he invited you, at the end of January, to make a visit to Warsaw?

A One cannot put it quite that way. After the meetingat Berchtesgaden with the Fuehrer, I had a further conversation with Beck in Munich. In this discussion Beck explained to me again that the problem was very difficult, but he would do everything he could in speaking to his governmental colleagues in an effort to find a solution. We then agreed that I would pay him a visit in Warsaw. During this visit we also spoke of the question of racial minorities and the Danzig Corridor.

Also, during this talk the theme was not carried much further; rather, Mr. Beck simply set forth the arguments again against the difficulties. I told him that it was impossible to simply leave this problem standing between Germany and Poland. I also pointed out the great difficulties implicit in the German minorities in Poland, and that it would be an

H0096 - 0045

undignified circumstance if Germany simply let this thing stand.

Beck promised to help in this question, and also to again examine the other questions.

Then, on the following day, I spoke shortly with Marshal Ritschmigli, but here the conversation reached no further results.

Q At that time did you ask Beck to pay a further visit to Berlin, and did this visit take place? Or did Beck choose otherwise?

A What happened was that I invited Beck to Berlin, because his first visit was not an official one. Unfortunately, however, Beck did not come to Berlin, but, as I have already said, he went to London.

Q What was the reaction of his visit to London on further negotiations?

A The reaction of this London visit was entirely a surprise to us. Ambassador Lipski, I believe on the 21st of March, suddenly handed us a memorandum.

Q Let me interrupt you. On the 21st of March you had a conversation with Lipski regarding the division of Czechoslovakia and the problems that arose from an erection of the Protectorate?

A I believe that was on the 26th.

Q Yes.

A On the 26th I did have a talk with Lipski, that is true, and in this talk Lipski mentioned certain doubts of his which he had toward Germany's promise of protection to Czechoslovakia. He expressed the wish that between Hungary and Poland--two lands that had always had close connections with each other--a direct, common boundary should be established immediately. Since this was not possible, he had the feeling that Germany's protection of Czechoslovakia was directed immediately against Poland.

I told him that no one had said anything against Poland; this was a measure to point out to Hungary that these questions had to be clarified. However, I believe that Lipski looked forward to establishing a link over the Carpathia-Ukraine Mountains.

Q Is it true that consultations took place between Poland and the British Government and the Russian Government around the 20th of March?

A Yes. These consultations, so far as I recall, were based on the

H0096 - 0046

suggestion made by Lord Simon. A common statement was to be made with regard to Poland. But then, Poland did not regard this as satisfactory, and London made clear that this could not come into question as a solution of the Polish problem.

Q Is it true that Poland worked toward a concrete alliance with England and France?

A There can be no doubt, and it is a historical fact, that Poland strove for an alliance with England.

Q When did the German Government find out that Poland had been promised support by England and France?

A The question did not come through.

Q When did you and the German Government find out that France and England had promised Poland support?

A That became known--I can't tell you the date precisely, but it was, at any rate, the last third of March. I know, at least--it was the conviction of all of us then, and it has now become a fact--that these relations that existed in the last third of March between Warsaw and London were decisive, because of the answer that Poland, surprisingly enough, handed us in a memorandum on the 26th of March.

Q It is correct that in this memorandum there was a statement that a further pursuit of the German goals regarding a change in the Danzig and Corridor questions would mean was so far as Poland was concerned?

A Yes, that is correct. That was a great surprise to us. I know that I read the memorandum, and for a moment I simply could not comprehend that such an answer had been made, when one considers that for months we had striven to find a solution, which--and I wish to emphasize this--Adolf Hitler, at that time, could bring about only because of his great authority with the German people.

I don't want to get lost in details, but I do want to say that the Danzig and Corridor problems, since 1919, had been considered great problems by statesmen, and they considered that some revision of Versailles had to be undertaken. I should like to refer to statements of Winston Churchill on this subject.

H0096 - 0047

suggestion made by Lord Simon. A common statement was to be made with regard to Poland. But then, Poland did not regard this as satisfactory, and London made clear that this could not come into question as a solution of the Polish problem.

Q Is it true that Poland worked toward a concrete alliance with England and France?

A There can be no doubt, and it is a historical fact, that Poland strove for an alliance with England.

Q When did the German Government find out that Poland had been promised support by England and France?

A The question did not come through.

Q When did you and the German Government find out that France and England had promised Poland support?

A That became known--I can't tell you the date precisely, but it was, at any rate, the last third of March. I know, at least--it was the conviction of all of us then, and it has now become a fact--that these relations that existed in the last third of March between Warsaw and London were decisive, because of the answer that Poland, surprisingly enough, handed us in a memorandum on the 26th of March.

Q It is correct that in this memorandum there was a statement that a further pursuit of the German goals regarding a change in the Danzig and Corridor questions would mean was so far as Poland was concerned?

A Yes, that is correct. That was a great surprise to us. I know that I read the memorandum, and for a moment I simply could not comprehend that such an answer had been made, when one considers that for months we had striven to find a solution, which--and I wish to emphasize this--Adolf Hitler, at that time, could bring about only because of his great authority with the German people.

I don't want to get lost in details, but I do want to say that the Danzig and Corridor problems, since 1919, had been considered great problems by statesmen, and they considered that some revision of Versailles had to be undertaken. I should like to refer to statements of Winston Churchill on this subject.

H0096 - 0048

Now, all these statesmen were undoubtedly of the opinion that, actually, a territorial revision of this Corridor would have to be undertaken. Hitler, in turn, wanted to make a clear break; he wanted to make perfectly clear to Poland that he accepted this Corridor, and that only Danzig should return to the Reich, so as to enable an economic solution.

That, in other words, was the basis of the proposals which I worked on for four months, on Hitler's commission. Our surprise was all the greater when, suddenly, the other side declared that a further pursuit of these goals, which we regarded as very generous, would mean war.

I informed Hitler of this, and I remember very well that Hitler accepted it very quietly.

Q Is it correct that on the following day you stated to the Polish Ambassador that the memorandum of the 26th of March, 1939, could not serve as the basis for a solution?

H0096 - 0049

A That is true. I just said that Hitler accepted this serious report on the part of the Polish Ambassador very peacefully and that I should tell him that no solution could be founded on this basis.

Q Is it true that thereupon, on the 6th of April, 1939, the Polish Ambassador Beck traveled to London and reached a temporary agreement of mutual assistance between England and France and Poland and returned to Poland with that agreement?

A Yes.

Q What was the German reaction to this pact of mutual assistance?

A The German reaction--here I may refer to Hitler's Reichstag speech in which he stated his attitude towards this whole problem. We felt this pact of mutual assistance between Poland and England to be not in agreement with the German-Polish pact of 1934, for in the 1934 pact things were excluded between Germany and Poland which were then contradicted by this new pact between Poland and England. For example, Poland had obliged herself, if Germany became involved in a war with England, to enter on Germany's side. I know that Adolf Hitler felt that it was not in agreement with what he had agreed to with Chamberlain in Munich, namely, the elimination of the possibility of any complication of force between Germany and England.

Q Is it true that Germany then sent through you a memorandum to Poland regarding the cancellation of the Polish-German agreement of 1934?

A That was in the same Reichstag speech of the Fuehrer. This memorandum stated what I have just stated here--that the new treaty was not in agreement with the treaty of 1934 and that, consequently, Germany regarded the 1934 pact as no longer valid.

Q Is it true that as a consequence of this memorandum there came about a sharpening in German-Polish relations and that new difficulties arose in the minority question?

A Yes, that is true. In the time theretofore negotiations had been taking place in order to put the minority problem on a new basis. These negotiations were before the 28th of May, and after the 28th of May the situation of the German minorities in Poland became more difficult than

H0096 - 0050

they had been previously. There was at that time a Polish group that was very active and carried out persecutions of Germans in Poland. This was part of their regular program. I know that precisely. In the months that followed the 28th of May--that is to say, in the summer of 1939--the so-called reception camps for fleeing persons were set up.

Q What about the British guarantees to Rumania, Greece, and later Turkey? How were they received in Germany?

A These statements could only be interpreted by the German policy as meaning that England was undertaking systematically a policy of drawing up treaties in Europe. That was Hitler's attitude and also mine.

Q Is it true that these guarantees and that Roosevelt's messages were then, on the 22nd of May, 1939, the consequence of a German-Italian pact of assistance? And what were the reasons for this pact?

A The situation between Germany and Italy had long been one of friendly relations; and in view of the worsening situation in

H0096 - 0051

Europe, on the suggestion of Mussolini these relations were deepened and set down in a pact of assistance. It was discussed first by Count Ciano and myself in Milan and prepared for. This was an answer to the efforts of English-French policy.

Q. Is it correct that the crisis with Poland became acute through the fact that on the 6th of August in Danzig a strike took place and thus Germany was forced to adopt an attitude?

A. Yes, that is so. There was a quarrel between the polish representatives and the senate of the city of Danzig. A note of the Polish representative was sent to the president of the Senate in which it was stated that certain persons of the senate wanted to act contrary to Polish regulations. This information proved later to be false, was answered by the senate, and led to a sharp exchange of notes between the Senate and the Polish representative. I then, on Hitler's commission, commissioned the secretary of state of the foreign office to make representations to the Polish Government.

Q. Is it true that Weisecker, on the 15th of August, called the French and English ambassadors in order to inform both these ambassadors in detail of the seriousness of the situation?

A. Yes, that is true. He did that on my commission.

Q. On the 18th of August was Henderson again asked, because the situation was becoming more acute in Poland and Danzig, to visit you?

A. Yes. Talks took place a few days later between the secretary of state and the English Ambassador. The state secretary told him in very clear words of the great difficulties in the situation and told him that things were taking a very serious development.

Q. Is it true that in this phase of the crisis you made up your mind, upon the basis of a suggestion made to you, to undertake negotiations with Russia, and what were your reasons for this?

A. Negotiations with Russia had already been undertaken sometime previously. Marshal Stalin, in March 1939, delivered a speech in which he made certain hints of his wish to have better relations with Germany. At that time

H0096 - 0052

I informed Adolf Hitler of this speech and asked him whether or not we couldn't see whether this hint on Stalin's part had something real behind it. Hitler was at first hesitant; he then, however, became more and more receptive to this idea. Negotiations for commercial treaties were underway, and during these negotiations I, with the permission of the Fuehrer, conducted investigations to find out whether there could not be brought about a definite reconciliation between National Socialism and Bolshevism and whether we could not agree at least on the interests of the respective countries.

Q. How did these negotiations between the negotiators for the commercial treaty continue?

A. Negotiations of Ambassador Schnurrer in a very short length of time made clear to me the fact that Stalin had meant this speech seriously. There was an exchange of ideas and exchange of telegrams with Moscow which, in the middle of August, led to Hitler's sending a telegram to Stalin, and Stalin in his answer to this telegram invited a plenipotentiary to Moscow. The conclusion of this was the Russo-German pact.

H0096 - 0053

Q. Is it true that you were sent to Moscow as plenipotentiary?

A. Yes, that is well known.

Q. When did you fly to Moscow, and what negotiations did you there carry on?

A. On the evening of the 22nd of August I arrived in Moscow. The reception given me by Stalin and Molotov was very friendly. We had at first a two hours discussion. In this discussion the entire complex of Russo-German relations was discussed.

The result was, first, the mutual will of both nations to put their relations on a new basis. This should be expressed in a non-aggression pact. Secondly, the spheres of interests of the two countries were to be defined, which also came about through a secret additional agreement.

Q. For what reason was this secret protocol concluded? What was its content, and what were the political bases of it?

A. I should like to say, first of all, this secret protocol has been spoken about frequently here in this Court. In the negotiations at that time with Stalin and Molotov, I spoke very openly, as also the Russian gentlemen did with me. I described Hitler's desire that the two countries should reach a definitive agreement, and I also of course spoke of the critical situation in Europe.

I told the Russian gentleman that Germany would do everything to ameliorate the situation in Poland and to settle it peacefully, despite everything, but I left no doubt that the situation was very serious and that it was possible that war might break out. That was in the clear. It was here a question for both statesmen, Stalin as well as Hitler, of territories which both countries had lost after an unfortunate war. This problem would have to be solved one way or another. It was, therefore, well to look at these things from some other point of view. And just as Adolf Hitler was of the opinion that I stated in Moscow, that in some form or other this problem would have to be solved, and thus also on the Russian side it was clear that this was the case.

We then spoke about what should be done in the case of a war, what should be done by the Germans and the Russians. A line of demarcation was agreed on,

H0096 - 0054

it is known about, that in the event of intolerable Polish provocation or if a war should break out, that this would be a boundary, so that Germany and Russia could not be accused of collusion as regards Poland. This well known line was founded along the line of the Rivers Fisia and Bug. And it was agreed that in the case of conflict the territories lying to the west of these rivers would be the German sphere of interest, and those to the east would be the Russian spheres of interest.

Then after the outbreak of the Russian war the occupation of these zones was undertaken on the one hand by Germany and on the other by Russia. I may repeat that at that time I had the impression, both from Hitler and Stalin, that the territories, the Polish territories and other territories that had been delimited in these spheres of interest about which I shall speak shortly, that these were regions which both countries had lost after an unfortunate war. And both statesmen undoubtedly held the opinion that if the last chances for negotiations for the settlement of this problem had been exhausted, there was certainly a justification for Adolf Hitler to attempt to solve the problems connected with these territories in another way, and to incorporate these territories into Germany.

Over and above that, it is also known that theother spheres of interest were defined, Finland, the Baltic countries and Bessarabia. This was a great agreement which was reached in the interest ot two great powers in the event of a peaceful settlement as well as in the case of war.

Q. Is it correct that these negotiations were drawn up specifically only in case that on the basis of the Non-aggression Pact between Russia and Germany, it should not be possinle to solve the Polish question on a diplocatic basis?

A. Please repeat the question.

Q. Is it correct that this solution was thought of only in the case that, despite the pact of non-agression, the Polish question could not be solved in a diplomatic way, and only in this case was the pact to become effective?

H0096 - 0055

A Yes, that is so. I stated at that time that on the German side everything would be attempted to solve the problem in a diplomatic and peaceful way.

Q Did Russia promise you diplomatic assistance or well meaning neutrality in the search for this solution?

A It could be seen from the Pact of Non-aggression and from all the discussions in Moscow that this was so. It was perfectly clear that if because of the Polish attitude a war broke out, Russia would take a friendl attitude towards us.

Q When did you returnfrom Moscow, and what situation did you find in Berlin?

A The Pact of Non-Aggression with the Soviet Union was concluded on the 23rd. On the 24th I returned to Germany. I had thought at first that I would fly to the Fuehrer in Berchtesgaden, but during the flight or later I was asked to come to Berlin.

We flew to Berlin, and there I informed Hitler of the Moscow agreement. The situation that I found there was indubitably tense. On the next day I noticed this particularly.

Q To what circumstances can this aggravation of the Polish-German situation be attributed?

A In the days of the middle of August all sorts of things had happened which generated electricity in the air--boundary incidents, difficulties between Danzig and Poland. On the one hand, Germany was accused of interfering in Danzig, and, on the other hand, we accused Poland of taking military measures inside Danzig, and so on.

Q Is it true that you on your return from Moscow to Berlin, were informed of the signing of the Polish-British Pact of mutual assistance, and what was your and Hitler's reaction to this?

A That was on the 25th of August. On the 25th of August I found out about the conversations that the Fuehrer had had with Ambassador Henderson during my absence, I believe in Berchtesgaden. This was a very serious conversation. Henderson brought a letter from the British Prime Minister, which stated clearly that a war between Germany and Poland would involve also England.

H0096 - 0056

Then on the 25th in the morning the Fuehrer answered this letter--I believe the same day--and the answer was so couched that at the moment a solution by diplomatic means could not be anticipated.

I spoke with the Fuehrer on the 25th regarding this exchange of letters, and I asked him in my turn to consider this question once more. I asked him whether we might not make one more effort with England.

This 25th of August was a very eventful day. In the morning a communication came fromthe Italian government, according to which Italy, in the case of a conflict regarding the question of Poland, would not stand at Germany's side.

H0096 - 0057

The Fuehrer decided then to receive Ambassador Henderson once more in the course of that day. This meeting took place around noon of the 25th. I was present at it. The Fuehrer explained once more to Henderson in detail his earnest wish to reach an understanding with England. He described to him the very difficult situation with Poland and asked him to fly back to England to discuss this whole situation with the British Government. Ambassador Henderson agreed to this and I sent him, I believe in the course of the afternoon, a verbal note in which the Fuehrer expressed his hopes for an understanding and stated again his hope for an understanding between England and Germany, so that the ambassador could inform his government correctly of this.

Q. Is it correct that after the British-Polish guarantee became known, you asked Hitler to with draw the military measures that were being taken?

A. Yes, that is so. I just wanted to tell you about it. During the course of the afternoon, I heard in the course of the day that certain nilitary measures were being taken and I received in the course of the afternoon, a Reuter despatch -- at any rate, a press dispatch of some sort -- that the Polish-British Pact had been ratified in London. I believe there was a note appended that the Polish Ambassador Raschitzki (?) had been sick but had nevertheless suddenly turned up in the Foreign Office in order to sign the Pact.

Q. Was this treaty signed before or after it was known that Italy would not assist Germany?

A. It was undoubtedly concluded aftersards: I, of course, do not know the hour of the day but I believe it was on the afternoon of the 25th of August, and Italy's refusal had already reached us by noon: In other words, it had been definitively decided at Rome in the morning or on the day before; at any rate, I can judge this only from other facts. Perhaps I might, however, answer your other question. When I received this press despatch, which was given to me again when I reached the Chancellery, I went immediately to Hitler and asked him to stop the military measures, whatever they were, although I was not oriented in military matters, and I told him that it was perfectly clear that this meant war with England and that England could never deny having

H0096 - 0058

signed that Pact with Poland, could never repudiate that Pact. The Fuehrer reflected only a short while and then he waid that was true and immediately called his military adjutant -- I believe it was Fieldmarshal Keitel-- and asked him to call together the generals and stop the military measures that were then being taken. On this occasion, he expressed himself to the effect that he said "We had received two pieces of bad news today and I hope it were possible that the"report about the attitude of Italy had been noted immediately in London" and that it was thereupon that the final Pact with Poland had been signed.

Q. Did you and Hitler, during these days, make efforts with Henderson to clear up the conflict, and what were your proposals?

A. I have already stated that the Fuehrer -- I believe it was on the 25th at noon -- told Henderson that he still and always had the intention of reaching some final understanding with England. The question of Danzig and the Corridor would have to be solved in some form and he wanted to make some general and conclusive offer to England in order to settle these things in a perfectly regular way.

Q. Is it true that Hitler then put an airplane at Henderson's disposal in order to enable him to explain these proposals to his government and in order to ask his government?

A. Yes, that is true. I know Henderson -- I believe it was on the next day, the 26th -- flew to England in a German airplane but what the details of this were I don't know, but I know that the Fuehrer told him in his discussion "Take an airplane and immediately fly to your government."

Q. What results did Henderson bring back to Berlin on the 28th of August?

A. I should like to say in this connection, that in view of the critical situation between Germany and Poland, which were also know to the British Ambassador, Hitler expressed a certain disappointment to me that the British Ambassador had not returned more quickly with his answer, for the atmosphere was highly charged with electricity. On the 28th, Henderson then had a new disucssion with the Fuehrer. I was again present. The answer that Sir Neville Henderson brought back with him from London, appeared at first unsatisfactory

H0096 - 0059

to the Fuehrer. Its contents were made up of certain points that seemed unclear to the Fuehrer but the main point was that England foresaw a great solution of the problems in Germany and Poland, on the presupposition that the German-Polish question could be brought to a peaceful solution. In the discussion, Adolf Hitler told Sir Neville Henderson that he would look over the note and would then request again an audience with Henderson.

Q. Is it true that in this memorandum, England suggested direct negotiations between Germany and Poland?

A. That is true. One of the points in the note was that the English suggested that German-Polish direct negotiations should be undertaken as the most appropriate way to reach a solution; and secondly, that these negotiations should take place as soon as possible, because England had to admit that the situation, because of the frontier incidents, was very tense. The note stated that no matter what solution might be found -- I believe this was in the note-- it should be guaranteed by the great powers.

Q. Did England suggest that it should mediate these direct negotiations between Germany and Poland?

A. Yes.

Q. How were these German suggestions accepted which, on the 29th of August, were issued as an answer to Henderson's memorandum and were given by Hitler to Henderson?

A. The situation was this: On the 29th, Hitler again received the British Ambassador and on this occasion again told him that he was ready to react to the English suggestion of the 28th; that is to say, that despite the great tension and despite the Polish attitude, he was prepared to make efforts for a peaceful solution of the German-Polish problems, as suggested in the British note of the 28th.

H0096 - 0060

Q What were the reasons for including in this German proposal a request that a Polish plenipotentiary be sent?

A In Hitler's communication to Henderson and the British Government, it was stated that the German Government, in view of the tsnse situation, would immediately make suggestions for a solution of the Danzig and Corridor problems. The German Government hoped to be in a position to have these proposals ready by the time a Polish negotiator arrived, which they believed would take place before the 30th.

Q Is it correct that Hitler included this request for a plenipotentiary with a 24-hour lapse because he wanted to avoid a conflict because of the mobilization that was taking place on each side?

A That is quite true. I remember that on the 29th Ambassador Henderson asked Hitler whether that was an ultimatum. The Fuehrer answered that that was no ultimatum, but was simply a proposal born from the situation, or something of that sort. I should like to repeat that the situation on Danzig and the Corridor in the last days of August looked as if the guns would go off on their own unless something were done. That was the reason for this relatively short period of time that the Fuehrer allowed. He feared that if more time were allowed, matters would reach such a point that the danger of war would not become slighter, but greater.

Q Is it true that despite the fact that this information regarding the point was given to Henderson, the British Government called this suggestion unreasonable?

A I know of the British reaction from several documents that I saw later. The reaction became clear first of all in my discussion with Henderson on the 30th.

Q Is it true that on thr 30th of August you received a confidential communication regarding Poland's total mobilization?

A That is true. On the 30th, Hitler awaited a report from the Polish negotiator. This, however, did not come. However, I believe on the evening of the 30th the news arrived that Poland had ordered general mobilization although it had not yet made that order public. It was made public, I believe, on the next morning. This, of course, increased the

H0096 - 0061

seriousness of the situation enormously.

Q Is it true that the British Government then withdrew its offer to mediate in that it made further suggestions that direct negotiations should take place between Germany and Poland without England's mediation?

A That is so. This took place on the 30th. A Polish negotiator had arrived. In the meantime, Hitler had prepared the suggestion which he wanted to submit to a man who could act with complete authority on the part of Poland. Then, shortly before midnight, the news came that the British Ambassador wanted to communicate something to his government. The discussions with the Polish emissary were postponed, and around midnight of the 30th of August this well-known meeting took place between Henderson and myself.

Q You heard Schmidt's description of this meeting. Do you have anything to add to his description of it?

H0096 - 0062

A I should like to say the following in regard to that meeting. It is perfectly clear that at that moment all of us were nervous, including both the English Ambassador and myself. I must mention here the fact that the British Ambassador had, on the day before, had a little scene with the Fuehrer and there was consequently a certain tension between the British Ambassador and myself and it was my task to try to calm him down.

I then purposely proceeded calmly with the British Ambassador and accepted his communication. I hoped that this communication would consist of his presenting me to a Polish negotiator. However, this did not happen. Rather, Sir Nevile Henderson explained to me, first, that his government could not recommend this course of action despite the tense situation that had been brought about by Polish mobilization. Instead, the British Government left it up to the German Government to conduct matters in a diplomatic way. Secondly, he said that if the German Government would put the same suggestions at the disposal of the British Government, the British Government would be ready, in so far as these suggestions were reasonable, to exert its influence positively in Warsaw towards the finding of a solution.

From the whole situation, it can be seen that this was a very difficult answer because, as I said, the situation was enormously tense and the Fuehrer had been waiting since the day before for a Polish emissary.

I, in my turn, feared also that unless a solution were found quickly, as I said, the guns would go off by themselves.

I then told Henderson of the proposals that the Fuehrer had made. I read them to him, and I should like to state here again that the Fuehrer had specifically forbidden me to let these proposals out of my hands. He told me that I could only communicate them in their substance to the British Ambassador. I did a little more in that I read all the proposals from the beginning to the end to the British Ambassador. I did this because I still hoped that the British Government could exert its influence in Warsaw and assist in a solution.

But, here, too, I must openly state that I deduced from my talk with the British Ambassador on the 30th of August, as well as from his whole attitude which Schmidt also described yesterday, as well as from the substance of the British communication, that England was not at this moment ready to face the situation in its full implications and was not ready to do its best to bring about a peaceful solution.

H0096 - 0063

Q. What happened after the contents of Henderson's note was made public? What did the German public do?

A. After I talked with the British ambassador I reported to the Fuehrer. I told him it had been a serious conversation. I told him also that in pursuance of his instructions I had not given the memorandum to Henderson despite his wishes. I also had an impression how serious the situation was, and it was my conviction that the British guarantee to Poland was ineffective. That was my very definite impression of this conversation. Then in the course of the 31st the Fuehrer waited the whole day to see whether or not in some form or other a Polish negotiator would come or whether a new communication would come from the British Government.

We have heard here from Herr Dahlerus about the interference of Herr Goering in this matter. There can be no doubt that during the course of that night, at the latest in the morning, the precise proposals of the Reich Government were in the hands of both the London Government and the Warsaw Government. Throughout the whole of the 31st the Fuehrer waited, and I am of the conviction -- and I want to say it very learly here -- that he hoped that something would happen on the part of England.

Then in the course of the 31st the Polish ambassador came to me, but it is known that he had no plenipotentiary powers to do anything or to enter int negotiations or even to accept proposals of any sort. I don't know whether t Feuhrer would have authorized me on the 31st to make such proposals, but I h to be possible. But the Polish ambassador was not authorized to accept them, as he specifically told me. And I may point out briefly that regardin the attitude in Warsaw the witness Dahlerus has already given further testim

Q. Is it correct that the German proposals that had been given on the 3 in the evening by you to Henderson were sent to Warsaw by London only on the evening of the 31st of August?

A. That I can't tell you precisely, but that undoubtedly can be verifie from official documents.

Q. What consideration then led to the final decision to take military action against Poland?

A. I can not tell you the details of this. I only know that the Fuehr

H0096 - 0064

considered again the proposals that I had made to the British ambassador on the midnight of the 30th and then on the 31st of August published them; made them public. The reaction of the Warsaw radio -- and I remember this reaction precisely -- it was unfortunately on such a sort as to be an invitation for battle. And the German proposals had been characterized by Henderson as reasonable. They were called by the Polish radio a piece of arrogance. At any rate, shortly after these reports the suggestions were published, and Warsaw made a very sharp and negative answer. I believe that it was this that persuaded the Fuehrer in the night between the 31st of August and the 1st of September to issue the order to march. I for my part can only say that I came to the Reich Chancellory. The Fuehrer there told me that the order had been given, and that that was all that could be done, and the thing was now in motion. I then told the Fuehrer that I wished him the best of luck. I might also mention the outbreak of hostilities was the end of years of efforts on the part of Adolf Hitler to bring about friendship with England.

Q. Did Mussolini make another mediatory gesture, and how did this proposal come out?

A. Yes, that is true. On the 3rd of September, in the morning, such a proposal at mediation came about -- arrived at Berlin -- that Mussoline was still in a position, if the German Government agreed rapidly, to bring this problem to the form of a conference. It was said at the same time that the French Government was agreeable to this conference. Germany also immediately agreed, but a short time later -- I can not now precisely remember the hour-- it was declared in a speech by Lord Halifax in the House of Commons or some other British body that this proposal was turned down by London.

Q. Do you know whether France also turned down this suggestion?

A. I have already said we received the information through the Italian Government that the French Government either favored the suggestion or had already accepted it.

Q. After the conclusion of the Polish campaign did you see possibilities of peace and pursue them?

A. After the conclusion of the Polish campaign I had a few long talks with Adolf Hitler. The situation then was such that undoubtedly French lack

H0096 - 0065

of enthusiasm for this whole war could be felt. There was the phoney war in the west. Hitler, so far as I can judge from everything that he told me, did not want an extension of the war. I believe this was so for all of us members of the Government. I can remind you of the speech that Goering held at that time. Hitler held a speech in Danzig, and I believe later somewhere else, perhaps in the Reichstag, in which he twice told England and France in unmistakable terms that he was ready at any time to carry on negotiations. At that time also very cautiously we listened around in diplomatic circles to find out what the mood was in the foreign capitals, but the public statements and speeches showed Adolf Hitler clearly that peace could not be thought of as in the realm of possibility.

Q. What did you do to prevent the war from becoming more extended?

A. It was my most earnest endeavor after the Polish campaign to attempt to localize the war, that is, to prevent the war from spreading throughout Europe. I however was forced soon to the conclusion that once a war has broken out politics is not the decisive factor any longer; that in such cases the machinery of the General Staff begins to move. Thus our diplomatic efforts were undoubtedly -- everywhere, in scandinavia and in the Balkans and elsewhere -- were against the war spreading. Things however did take the course they did. I should like to state that according to my conversation with Adolf Hitler-- and I am also of the conviction that the German military men are of the same opinion -- that Hitler wished in no way to extend the war.

Q. Is it correct that you received information which pointed out the intensions of the Western Powers to effect a break-through into the Ruhr?

A. Yes, that is true. There were a large number of such reports. The intelligence service that we had -- of which we had many channels -- all ran together from the Foreign Office. The Foreign Office did not have much of an intelligence service, but relied on the diplomatic channels. But carrying this on, we received reports that led one to conclude without any doubt that the Western Powers had the intension at the first appropriate opportunity to advance on the Ruhr. The situation in the west was such that the West Wall was a very strong military barrier against France. It was clear to us that such an

H0096 - 0066

attack might come over neutral territory, such as in Belgium and Holland.

THE PRESIDENT: How much longer do you intend being, Dr. Horn?

DR. HORN: I believe an hour to an hour and a half.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, the Tribunal has listened with great patience to a very great deal of detail. All I can say is that this exaggerated going into detail doesn't do the defendant's case any good in my opinion. We will adjourn.

(The Tribunal adjourned until 30 March 1946 at 1000 hours.)